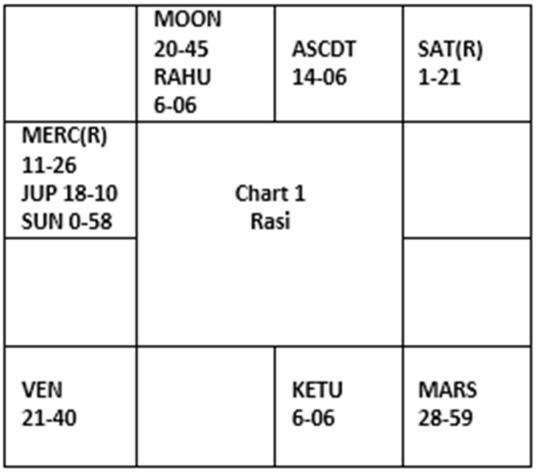
Modernisation of Astrology

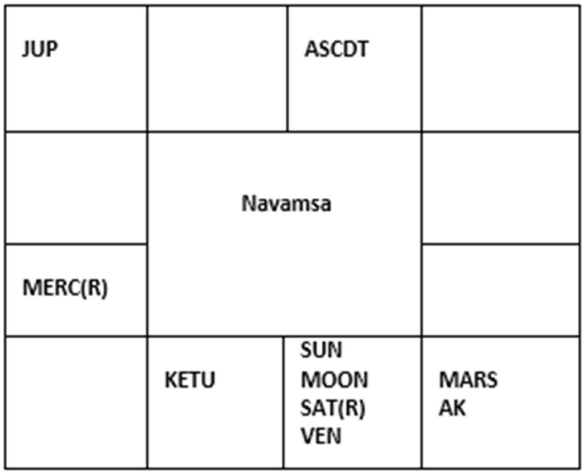
The closing two centuries of the previous millennium will stand out in the history of astrology as producing two of the world's most brilliant astrological savants – Prof. B. Suryanarain Rao and Dr. B.V. Raman – whose unstinted efforts led to the modernization of this ancient science.

The combined work of the grandfather and grandson resulted in restoring Jyotisha to its pristine glory after an interregnum period of neglect cleansed of the accretions of superstition and tantric practices that had come to be identified with it and which had pushed it into a pitiful state of despise and exploitation. It will not be difficult for the discerning student of astrology to identify several hereditary horoscopic features in the charts of the two great thinkers.

The Ascendant Taurus in Vargottama strength and the 10th occupied by Mercury and Jupiter as also the Sun made Prof. Rao (Chart 1) stand out like a colossus in the history of modern astrology. He rescued the science from the hands of charlatans where it had fallen after a glorious reign of several centuries as one of the most respected and influential sciences in ancient India. The court astrologer's role in most states of the country about three to four hundred years ago and earlier was much the same as that of today's scientific adviser to the prime-minister. It entailed great prestige and even greater responsibility as his advice was sought on every important decision and move of the ruler. Unfortunately for reasons that are not clear but need to be identified, astrology fell on bad days slipping into a state of gradual decay and degeneration until finally by the latter half of the 19th century or so, it came to be equated with superstition by an emerging breed of intellectuals, products of the British educational system. It was at this juncture that Prof. Rao arrived on the astrology scene.

Chart 1: Bangalore Suryanarain Rao: Born February 12, 1856 at about 12h.21m. (L.M.T) at 18 N, 84 E with a balance of 8 years 10 months 17 days of Venus Dasa at birth.





The concentration of three planets, Mercury, Jupiter and the Sun in Aquarius, a philosophical sign in the 10th, the Karmastana, made him a brilliant intellectual and practical philosopher. The Ascendant is a fixed earthy sign Taurus and derives strength from its Vargottama disposition in the Navamsa. A magnetic personality and fiercely independent spirit combined to make Prof. Rao an eloquent and forceful speaker who could sway his audiences with his powerful advocacy of the case for astrology.

The Moon is in the fiery sign Aries with Rahu aspected by a powerful Vargottama sign-dispositor Mars from the 5th, producing a restless spirit whose thirst for knowledge was unquenchable. Aries being the sign of intrepidity, his strength of mind and optimism stood him in good stead at several critical junctures in his life. It was this same fearlessness and confidence that prompted him to give up a highly lucrative and successful legal practice and take to the study of astrology. This choice in simple logic meant financial disaster but Prof. Rao was not one to be cowed down by any kind of uncertainly.

The sign-conjunction of Mercury with the Sun constitutes a powerful Raja Yoga. Jupiter as a natural benefic adds great dignity to the combination. Prof. Rao enjoyed a reputation for his knowledge of not only astrology but also of other Indian sciences and history as well. The exchange of houses between the 2nd and 10th lords, Mercury and Saturn, together with the disposition of the Yogakaraka in the 2nd conferred on Prof. Rao eloquence, logic and forceful argumentative

powers. Jupiter's aspect additionally on the 2nd conferred on him an unmatched ability to make correct astrological predictions. One of his most outstanding predictions covered the outbreak of World War I which was an event that no one, when it was made, could have imagined would take place. Writing in *The Astrological Magazine,* March 1914 and analyzing the planetary positions on April 13, 1914 for the commencement of the solar year *Ananda* he said:

The Moon in debilitation is in Scorpio, an evil sign and as the Moon represents the Mind and as he is situated in the house of destruction to the Sun and from him the Sun is in the 6th, a house which signifies debts, ruin, diseases and enemies, mankind will suffer much from these sources and from the displeasure of the royal will. There will be sudden outbursts of passion and excitement among the allies leading to anarchy and denunciation of old kingly authority….the war fever will be at its highest pitch."

After giving details of likely troubles in different parts of Europe, Prof. Rao continued:

Two deaths among European royalties are indicated and one will be from violence or treachery. Political relations all over the world will be highly excited during the months of August and September on account of the solar and lunar eclipses following one after the other within a fortnight.

Exactly as foreseen by him, two attempts were made on the life of the Archduke Frances Ferdinand when he and the Duchess were driving to the Town Hall at Sarajevo in Austria. Garbrionovico, a compositer, threw a bomb at the Duke but luckily it did not explode until the car had passed.

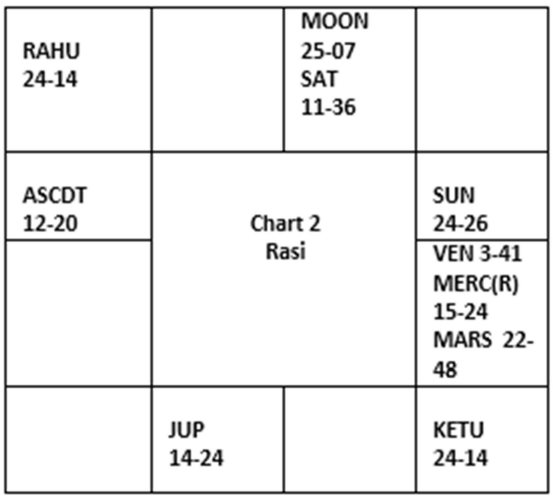
When the royal couple was touring through the town, a student, Preizio, fired two shots at the Duke mortally wounding both him and the Duchess. Both were dead within a few minutes. The old King Emperor Frances Joseph suffered a terrible blow in the death of his son and future king of Austria. The war started in August 1914.

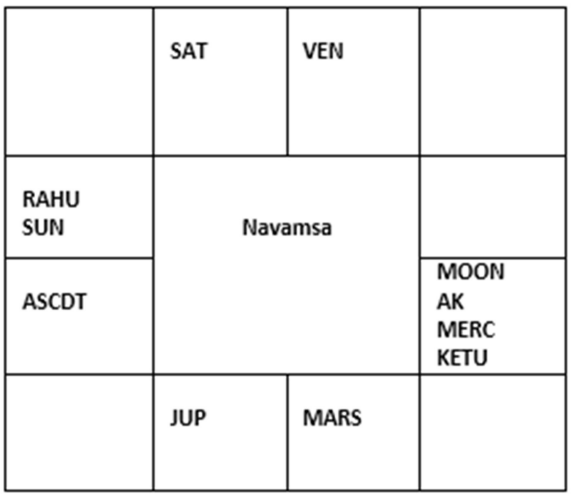
The striking feature of the chart is the combination of three planets in Karmastana, particularly of Jupiter and Mercury which made him an outstanding

authority on whichever subject he applied his mind to. Such a powerful 10th house brought him into contact with Maharajas, Governors and Viceroys with all of whom he moved on equal terms. His spirit of independence evoked great admiration amongst even his detractors, thanks to the powerful influence of Vargottama Mars on his Moon. A prolific writer, he wrote about 70 books on a variety of subjects including history, astrology, biographies, novels and fiction. Several of them still remain unpublished.

The Ascendant Taurus Vargottama and its ruler Venus aspected by Yogakaraka Saturn made him a man of great conviction and tremendous magnetic power. Credit must go to Prof. Rao for creating a taste for learning in a subject like astrology in intellectual circles at a time when skepticism and derision had come to mark the majority of educated Indians when it came to ancient Indian sciences. He was able to profoundly influence all those who came into contact with him. And of those who came under his intellectual spell, none was more carried way than his young grandson Dr. B.V. Raman who would later don the grandsire's mantle and take astrology to the rest of the world.

Chart 2: Dr. B.V. Raman: Born August 8, 1912 at 19h. 43m. at 12 N 59, 77 E 35 with a balance of 6 years 21 days of Mars Dasa at birth.





While Prof. Rao made astrology respectable and rescued it from the cheap jeers of ignoramuses whose only qualification to criticize the subject was that they knew nothing about it, Dr. Raman ensured for it a permanent place in the hearts

of the educated public with his brilliant presentation of the science as an academic discipline. There are certain interesting features in the charts that establish a celestial rapport between the two. The 10th house in Prof. Rao's chart becomes the Ascendant of Dr. Raman. No wonder Prof. Rao's work became Dr. Raman's passion! Both have Jupiter in the 10th and Jupiter aspecting Saturn. Yogakaraka Saturn in Prof. Rao's chart becomes the Ascendant lord of the other and *vice-versa*. Prof. Rao's horoscope is unique in having no planets in Dwirdwadasa or Shashtashtaka positions. In Dr. Raman's case, this somewhat unhelpful feature is present. However, this chart excels in more than one aspect. Six out of seven planets are in Kendras, a very unusual feature to be found only in those cases whose natives leave their footprints on the sands of time.

Changing Times and Atitudes

A fundamental difference between the charts of Prof. Suryanarain Rao and Dr. B.V. Raman lies in the fact that in the former's case, a benefic sign rises on the Ascendant. Though Prof. Rao (Chart 1) did a tremendous lot of work for the cause of astrology which would well-nigh have been impossible for any other, he had relatively congenial surroundings and the times, propitious for his work. People were ready and willing to be taught and the social order he had to deal with was in empathy with his work. But with Dr. Raman (Chart 2), the times had changed drastically. Atheism and agnosticism as well as an aggressive intellectual arrogance had taken over, certainly not conducive to the spread of astrology. What was worse was that there was opposition from major sections of the official scientific community which, blinded both by insolence and their total ignorance of Jyotisha, took every opportunity to denigrate astrology. Carrying out a campaign on a wide front against such vehement resistance was indeed a very difficult and unenviable task but which only an Aquarian such as Dr. Raman with his dauntless perseverance could pursue indefatigably.

Typical of the greater difficulties to be encountered in such a hostile scenario Dr. Raman's Jupiter is aspected by Saturn whereas in Prof. Rao's case, Jupiter alone aspects Saturn and not *vice-versa.* This mutual aspect of Jupiter and Saturn implies that any success that Dr. Raman could achieve would come only after

great effort and tremendous strain. Yet, for all these drawbacks, the horoscope is well equipped for ultimate success. Jupiter Vargottama on the meridian is the key planet of the horoscope and he is an outright benefic and the index of success. He gains great strength from his Vargottama position and occupation of Anuradha, the Nakshatra of the Ascendant lord. Jupiter occupies a friendly sign and is aspected by his sign-dispositor Mars. Five planets—the Moon, Mars, Mercury, Venus and Saturn – are in Kendras from Jupiter strengthening him. These planetary dispositions and several other Yogas contribute to the global stature that Dr. Raman eventually acquired.

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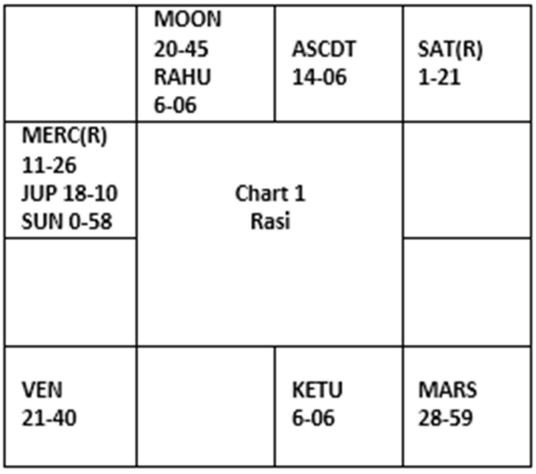

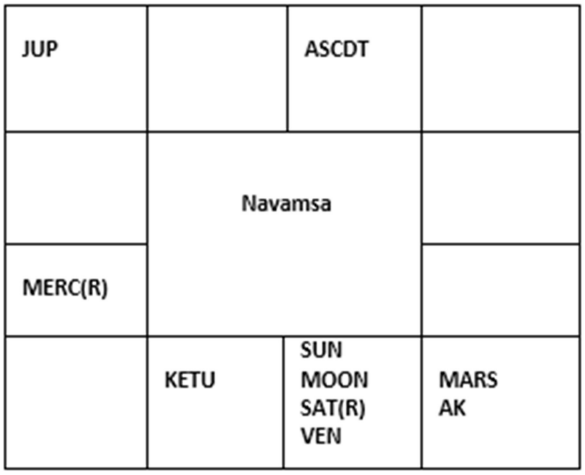

The complete divorce between Jupiter and the Nodes on one side as also between the 10th lord Mars and the Nodes on the other was largely responsible for the central core of Dr. Raman's achievements being the demystification of astrology. The powerful Jupiter in the 10th is aided by the aspect of Mars (ruling Tarka Sastra or logic) who, in turn, is with the powerful Vargottama intellectual Mercury. In a bold and hitherto untread manner, he showed with clarity and incisiveness the methodology, techniques of date preparation and models of prediction in astrology. And in doing so, he placed the science through his forceful writings in English, on a scientific pedestal on which it was originally conceived

and formulated by the great Rishis. Until then, astrology was treated as an amalgam of superstition, black magic and *tantric* practices that made it look like an antiquated archaic system of divination. This unique aspect of Dr. Raman's work can be put down primarily to the presence of Brahma Yoga, a rare Yoga for which Jupiter should be in a Kendra from the lord of the 9th, Venus should be in a Kendra from the lord of the 11th and Mercury too should be in Kendra from the Ascendant lord or the 10th lord. The results broadly speaking are scholarship, intellectual brilliance and renown. Adapted suitably, they point to the most important aspect of his life's work as intellectual.

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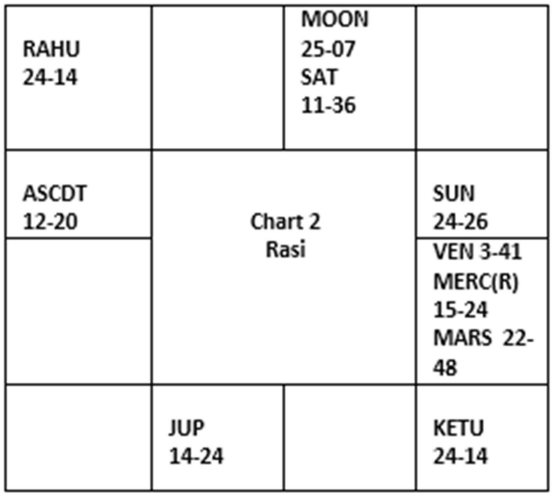

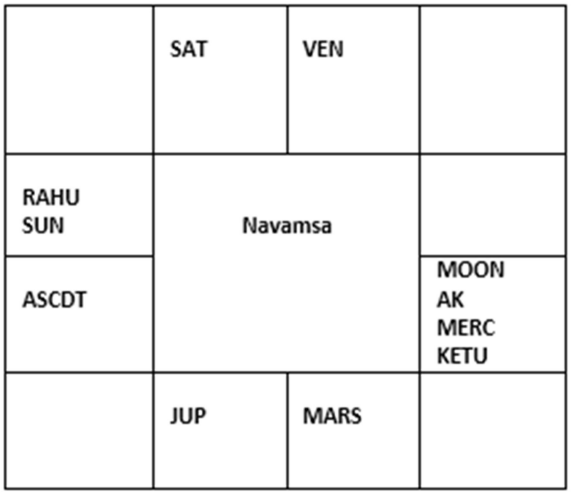

One of the most striking features of the chart is the synergetic disposition of the Ascendant lord Saturn with the Manahkaraka Moon and their combined aspect on the 10th house or Karmastana and on Jupiter, the Karaka for *vak* or speech. Dr. Raman was the perfect example for concurrence of thought, word and deed, the hallmark of a great soul and of which the scriptural texts say *Manasykem Vachasykem Karmaneykam Mahatmanah* (A great soul is one in whom thought, word and deed concur).

Dr. Raman's predictive* skills were as remarkable as Prof. Rao's. He anticipated the outbreak of the Second World War in his book **World Prospects in 1937-**

38 months in advance. Analysing the planetary positions for the lunar year *Eashwara,* Dr. Raman wrote:

*In the March 1955 issue of **American Astrology,** Cyril Fagan observes thus regarding Gandhi's death: "In April 1947 issue of THE ASTROLOGCIAL MAGAZINE, the Editor Dr. B.V. Raman made one of the most successful predictions of modern times, when he penned these words: 'Mars and Saturn will be in conjunction in the last degree of Cancer on November 12, 1947. These combinations also point to the loss (by assassination as violent Mars is with Saturn in the 12th) of a respected mass leader of this country.' (p.247) There cannot be the slightest doubt that Dr. B.V. Raman had Gandhi's Rasi chakra before him when he wrote these ominous words, for the conjunction of Mars and Saturn, to which he refers, occurred at 11h. 21m. 45s. (U.T.) on November 12, 1947, when the sidereal longitude of the malefics was Cancer 28^0 06' 28" and therefore close to Gandhi's Moon in Cancer 26^0 55'. Gandhi was assassinated at New Delhi on January 30, 1948 (see horary chart) so that Dr. B.V. Raman's prediction which was published at least 10 months before the event, found an astonishingly accurate, if tragic, fulfillment. The confirmation of this forecast puts Dr. Raman in the foremost rank of the world's successful astrologers, and renders the study of Jyotisha really worthwhile."

In the last week of October 1937 Mars joins Jupiter in Sagittarius. Then Saturn will be in Pisces. Mars aspects Saturn and Saturn in turn aspects Mars. Sagittarius is a war-like sign.

The peace of the world is threatened with plots and strategems. The whole world will be visited by calamities, of great magnitude on account of Kala Sarpa Yoga. There is no greater calamity than war.

For Britain, Germany and Italy, the combinations are unfavorable.

The nativities of Mussolini and Hitler will drift Europe towards a dangerous zone. It now remains for countries with wiser statesman to set right the equilibrium in European politics. Note the emperor of Japan's horoscope and see how Italy, Germany and Japan with absolute impunity break the public law of the world.

Dr. Raman's forecasts on various developments in the war, including its end, and the violent deaths of Hitler, Mussolini, India's Independence, Mahatma Gandhi's assassination etc., put him in the foremost rank of the world's most respected astrological savants.

Dr. Raman has often been judged on his brilliant predictions covering a period of over six decades. But this is not a fair assessment and can even be deemed doing injustice to what he really achieved in a life dedicated to the cause of astrology.

The predictions were brilliant but they certainly were not the most important part of his work. Though the 2nd lord Vargottama in the 10th aspecting the 2nd house gave him exceptionally remarkable intuitive perceptions in interpreting planetary positions, it was Jupiter as the planet of wisdom in the 10th aspected by the 10th lord Mars and the Ascendant lord Saturn that made him a visionary and endeavour constantly to make out a case for astrology as a science of immense potential in the face of growing opposition from a "science" obsessed society. This together with his efforts to defend the subject from the charge of exploitation were one of the more important facets of Dr. Raman's work.

Such stupendous achievements as these can only be explained by the heavy saturation of Yogas in the chart such as Chamara, Bheri, Parijata, Sankha, Vesi, Amala Rajalaksana and several other Raja Yogas caused by the combination and mutual aspect between the lords of Kendras and Trikonas involving Venus, Mercury and Mars which occur in Kendras, both from the Ascendant as well as the Moon.

Aquarius as the ascending sign at birth is powerfully aspected by its own lord Saturn and stamps the native with its finer characteristics. Saturn is in Rohini ruled by the exalted Moon. Typical features of such a native are a quiet unobtrusive nature, determination, patience and faithfulness. As a rule, Aquarians are philosophical and humane. In disposition they are reasonable and exercise their powers of discrimination and do not act on impulse. Endowed with good memory, they are capable of dealing with facts. Everything in the mental world appeals to them. They are sincere and idealistic, active in reforms, progressive in ideas and possess a sympathetic, good-hearted, pleasant, generous nature.

Deeply intuitive, they are happiest engaged in research. Pursuits where steady application of mind and concentration of thought are necessary appeal to Aquarians. They have inventive genius and literary abilities.

Next in importance to the Ascendant is the Moon-sign which is Taurus where the Moon is in exaltation. This sign tends to bring out the quiet and reflective side of the person. All the planets (except the Sun) in fixed signs is another important feature of the horoscope. This gives determination, firmness and self-reliance. It also makes one dependable. One is capable of great patience. Rise in life is through fixity of purpose and persistent effort. It confers on one the capacity to pursue a matter through thick and thin to a successful conclusion with missionary zeal before which no obstacle can hold out for long. But for these qualities, *The Astrological Magazine* which folded up in the early 1930's would not have come back to life and occupy the prominent position it did for over six decades from 1936 to 2007 when it closed down only to reinvent itself again as *Modern Astrology* continues to work for the cause of astrology that Dr.Raman initiated

The extraordinary strength of the Ascendant comes from its ruler Saturn (self) aspecting the 10th (Karmastana) along with the 10th lord Mars (motivation). As a result, Dr. Raman drew strength from a philosophy of exertion where effort becomes all important. This philosophy can also be seen reflected in his presentation of astrology. For the first time in the world, he emphasized it as a science of tendencies highlighting the role of free-will in horoscopic interpretation. In doing so, he blasted the unfair charge under which it had laboured for centuries that it encouraged determinism and fatalistic attitudes.

Dr. Raman's work acquired a permanent perennial quality supported as it was by the predominance of fixed signs and Kendras in his horoscope. The Ascendant, the Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn—seven out of ten factors—are all in Sthira Rasis occupying quadrants. As a result, his efforts continue, even after his passing away, to generate increasing interest in astrology in educated minds across the world.

Astrology was largely confined to the matching of charts for marriage until almost the early part of the 20th century though all that was needed to apply it to

present day situations was always there in its body. It saw phenomenal growth after Dr. B.V. Raman arrived on the scene. The application of astrology which was shown to extend to mundane forecasts also by Prof. Rao for the first time now included such important areas as earthquake prediction, volcanoes, cyclones, monsoons and weather prediction, public health, medical diagnosis and prognosis, surgery, accidents, aerial mishaps, career counseling and caesarean section births moving on to test tube babies, AIDS and terrorist attacks as the 20th century ended. Many of these topics were not known the way they are known today when astrology rules were first enunciated and even as early as about two hundred years ago.